

COUNCIL ON AGING/SENIOR CENTER

Fiscal Year 2012

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Departures: Kathy Koplow left at the end of FY 11 after completing her three-year term.

New Member: Susan Dierks was appointed to a three-year term to fill Kathy Koplow's seat.
Jack Wollensak was appointed in FY 11 to a three-year term to fill Doris Holden's seat.
Joel Gordon and Rosemary Kofler were re-appointed to two-year terms.
Joan Golowich and Juana Trujillo were re-appointed to three-year terms.

FY 12 HIGHLIGHTS

A new senior parking program was proposed and presented to the Town Manager, Select Board and Parking Committee. A five-month trial period began on August 1, 2011. Seniors, 65 years and older who reside in Amherst, were able to purchase a sticker for \$10 for their car for the remainder of 2011, which allowed them to park for up to four hours in the Boltwood or Ann Whalen lots on weekdays between 8 AM and 5 PM. A total of 106 stickers were sold. It was very successful. The parking sticker program continues. The fee is \$25 for the entire year of 2012.

A Long-Range Planning Committee began looking into ways to expand and improve the space in the Senior Center. Seven new senior centers and two community centers in Massachusetts and Connecticut were visited, photographed and directors were interviewed. Based on the projected growth of the 60 plus population in Amherst, and following the guidelines presented by an architect at the Annual MCOA meeting, the amount of space needed for a senior center in Amherst was calculated. A detailed proposal for the space needed was presented to the Town Hall in February 2012 for a new stand-alone Center on a site near the town center. Alternatives presented were: 1) major revisions and additions to the Bangs Community Center, 2) short-term changes in the current building that would increase the Senior Center space.

The Annual Volunteer Awards Program was held in October. Ruth Ann Eastman and John George were honored as exceptional volunteers. They received the Eveline Sears Awards. The Annual Flu Clinic was held in October. The State supply of vaccine was available only to uninsured seniors, therefore the Senior Center partnered with the Amherst Health Department and CVS to provide vaccine for all seniors.

Adult Social Day Care. The 2010 survey indicated that care giving is a big problem for many Amherst residents. The COA invited two Adult Social Day Care experts to speak about what such a program would involve if adopted at the Amherst Senior Center. Currently there are several elders that frequent the Senior Center who are in need of such a service, but we have inadequate space for such a program.

The Elder Nutrition Program through Highland Valley Elder Services received notice of State budget cuts, which would result in a 24% cut in meals to the needy. Since the program had not seen an increase in funding for 20 years, the COA wrote letters to four legislators and the local newspaper urging restoration of funding. The money was restored.

An Emergency Preparedness Project was initiated by Dr. Nancy Gilbert, a UMass School of Nursing Professor, and her nursing students. They focused on seniors and the problems encountered during the crisis following the October 2011 storm. In April, the students presented several workshops for seniors on how to prepare for an emergency and what to do during an emergency.

Health care coaches for elder tenants at Ann Whalen who do not have a primary care physician will be provided, thanks to a grant from Highland Valley Elder Services. Volunteers will be trained to take tenants to appointments and interpret medical information.

Security at the Bangs Community Center. The Senior Center and the Health Department considered ways to improve the security at Bangs, following several incidents of inappropriate behavior and unwelcome entry into office space.

A grant from the Amherst Club for \$2,500 was gratefully received. The money will be put into the Emergency Fund, which can be used for Amherst elders who meet income guidelines and need help with utility bills, rent arrears, medical bills or other situations that the social worker deems necessary.

The proposed PVTA fare increase posed a serious threat to elders and those with disabilities. Increased van fares could restrict the ability of those individuals to get to appointments and may further isolate them. The COA sent a letter to the PVTA requesting that fares not be raised for elders and those with disabilities. That request was honored.

The convalescent equipment closet was renovated in order to increase the space for increasing amounts of equipment. Some popular items are in great demand and have a waiting list. For those select items the loan period was changed to two months (from one year). People will be called at the end of two months to assess if the equipment is still needed or can be returned.

The Friends of the Amherst Senior Center held the *Third Annual Amherst Follies*, a fundraising variety show, at Buckley Recital Hall on Amherst College campus. Other fundraisers for FY 12 included a dinner at Bertucci's, intergenerational Singing Suppers with students at Amherst College, A Comedy Mystery Dinner Theater, bake sales and the solicitation in the Senior Spirit. A total of \$11,287 was raised in FY 12 to support the programs and services at the Senior Center.

A new fundraising effort was initiated. A solicitation envelope was included in the Town Clerk's annual census mailing. The response was significant and \$5,482 was netted for FY 12. Stylus project. A COA member proposed a creative fundraising idea. He designed and built a stylus to be used with the iPad, smart phone and other such devices. He donates all supplies and time necessary to build the stylus. They sell for \$5 and proceeds go to the Senior Center. The program raised \$515 in FY 12.

A \$300 grant from the Amherst Woman's Club was gratefully accepted. The money was used to help defray the cost of a new kitchen cart, replacing a broken one.

The computer tutors at the Senior Center gratefully accepted five used MacIntosh laptop computers as a donation from Amherst College. Although the laptops were too old to receive new software and be maintained by IT, they will be used for self-training by our four tutors. The Town's IT Department has promised two new Mac laptops in FY 13, which will be used by the tutors for teaching elders.

FY 13 FUTURE PLANS

The Senior Center is in need of a small van, which can be used by the staff or a volunteer for a variety of purposes – to pick up food, to provide emergency rides for elders to appointments, to deliver meals to elders, for trips to the Survival Center, to travel to meetings, and more. The Friends of the Amherst Senior Center approved the plan. A COA committee will begin the search for a van.

The COA remains committed to maintaining home delivery of meals to elders in need, despite budget cuts.

The COA will continue to work with the Amherst Health Department on ways to improve security at the Bangs Community Center.

The COA will continue to support the Friends of the Amherst Senior Center in the fundraising effort of the 2013 Amherst Follies.

The COA recognizes the need for increased space for seniors and will work toward enlarging our current space.

The COA will continue to work toward incorporating an Adult Social Day Care program into any new space we might acquire at the Senior Center.

The COA will continue to explore possibilities and funding for the proposed plan for a new stand-alone senior center at a site near the town center. The center would provide designated space for senior programs and classes, including space for an exercise equipment room, which would attract the influx of Baby Boomers.

AMHERST SENIOR CENTER

Fiscal Year 2012

PRINCIPAL GOAL: To run a multi-purpose Senior Center that serves as the community focal point for the provision of services to the elderly. The S. C. works to initiate, facilitate, coordinate, and/or provide those services which in the broadest sense enhance dignity, support independence, maintain health, and promote the involvement of Amherst's elderly in the general community.

THE SENIOR CENTER: A VITAL COMMUNITY RESOURCE

Whether it's simply reading our 16-page **bi-monthly newsletter, *THE SENIOR SPIRIT***, or coming in daily for the hot lunch program, Amherst's older residents have come to rely on the Senior Center. Here are examples of some of our program and service offerings in FY 12:

CLINICS: foot care, ear irrigation, massage, blood pressure, flu/health fair, hearing aid repair, and free consultations two days a week with an R.N.; psychological counseling, acupuncture clinics

FITNESS PROGRAMS/CLASSES: Flex and Stretch, Gentle Fitness, Tai Chi, Folkdance, Line dancing, Ballroom dancing, Osteoporosis Progressive Resistance Training Exercise, EnhanceFitness®, Senior Yoga, Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program, Improving Balance and Mobility with the Alexander Technique, Laughter Yoga, Enhance Fitness® exercise classes, Function Well Classes, Level One Yoga Mat Classes

ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES, EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS/WORKSHOPS: Falls Prevention classes, SHAKESPEARE CLASSES ("Twelfth Night", Henry IV--Part 1, Henry IV--Part II, Henry V, As You Like It, Richard III), COSMOLOGY CLASSES with Jim van Luik (including "Why Quantum Physics?", Dark Matter & the Expansion of the Universe, The Reductionism-Emergence Controversy in Classical & Quantum Physics, Introduction to and Basic Concepts of Quantum Theory, From Something to Nothing?, The Development of Quantum Theory), HEALTH SEMINARS (Balance Screening, Back Care, Breathe Easy Screening, "Just in Case" seminar to prepare for the unexpected, Some Tips to Help Keep Cool & Safe, Tick Talk, Hearing Loss & Related Resources, Health Care Options for People with Medicare, Trauma & Neuroscience: Reptiles, Mammals & the New Fangled Brain, Shedding Light on an Important Option, Taking Control of Your Medical Health Information Using a Personal Health Record, How to Protect Yourself From Medicare Abuse, Healthy Hearing Seminar, Outsmarting Arthritis, The CDH Traveling Vascular University, Palliative Care, Creating a Person Health Record), New Options Weekly Discussions, CAREGIVER SEMINARS (Managing Difficult Behaviors and Memory Issues, Caregiver Survival Tips, How to Make Your Home Safe for Maximum Independence, Acupuncture for Relaxation and Wellbeing), Senior Meditation classes, New Options weekly discussions, Beginning Sudoku, painting workshops, Spoon Carving workshop, FINANCIAL SEMINARS (monthly with financial advisor Howard Singer, monthly with financial advisor with Edward Jones'--Rich Friese, and a financial seminar with Dale Frank), LEGAL SEMINARS ("Taking Care of Business: Planning for the Future" with Attorney Karen Jackson, Medicaid & Estate Planning & Protecting Your Home with Attorney Jennifer Snyder, "Annuities" with Ryan Nelson, Medicaid Planning & Traditional Estate Planning with Attorney Bates, Taking Control of Your Future: A Legal Checkup with Attorney Julie Lackner), The Art of Dialogue,

Getting to Know Your Digital Camera, Download Photos from Your Digital Camera, DRAWING CLASSES (Back to Basics, Drawing People, Elements of Still Life, Elements of Landscape/ Seascape/Cityscape), Weekly Craft Workshops, “The People of China” film series with Paul Shepard, Memoir Writing Workshops, A New Zealand Travelogue, Credit Report Assistance with the Amherst Police, How Elder Mediation Can Be Helpful, AARP Driver Safety Class, free computer tutoring one on one, Swift River Anthology book reading, My Life My Health—Chronic Disease Self Management Series, Journey to Bhutan: A Travelogue, The ABCs of Renting Seminars, “Telling Your Life Story” discussions, School of Nursing seminar on How to Prepare for an Emergency, “Women Reflect on Aging, Death and Caregiving” seminar, “Making Memories Matter” –a museum artifacts and stories series, Gustaf Mahler Classes,

SOCIAL RECREATION MUSICAL SHOWCASES (Moonlight and Morning Star, The Gray Divas, Dan Daniels, Dick Partridge, Laurie Festa, Creative Drums with Brian Peltier, Anastasia Christie’s Dance Classes Recital, Dave Mindell—“The Rockin’ Robin”, Jeanette Miller—Concert Soprano, “Barrymore” with Richard Clark, “Reliving the 50s” with Dick Partridge, “Music is Love” with Dick & Dawn Kelley, Dance Generators, Roger Tincknell, Steve Henderson one-man play, Dave Mindell music of the 1950s-1980s), Senior Center Community Tag Sale, Public Safety Picnic, Thanksgiving Dinner, bridge, scrabble, billiards, Chinese Mahjongg, grocery bingo, Volunteer Awards Social, Singing Suppers funded by Amherst College, Holiday Concert/Party, Second Annual Spring Follies, weekly cribbage classes/games, Mexican Train Dominos and trips (Day on Your Own in New Haven CT, “A Prairie Home Companion at Tanglewood, Lobster Clam Bake at Foster’s in York ME & LL Bean, Day in Rockport MA, Culinary Institute of America & Vanderbilt Mansion, British Landscapes 10-day tour, Day in Salem, Day in Boston, Day in Newport, Red Lobster & Mark Twain House, Alaska Discovery Land & Cruise -13 day trip, Reflections of Italy 10 day trip, New England Spring Garden & Flower Show, Kringle Candle, Lee Premium Outlets), Amherst College “Ageless” Singing Suppers, Holiday Craft Sale, Spring Fling—Games & Fun, A Comical Mystery Dinner, Smith College Jazz Ensemble Performance

SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS: HVES (Highland Valley Elder Services) Title III Congregate hot lunch program, Meals on Wheels evening hot supper through the University of Massachusetts, HVES Title III Home Delivered hot lunch, AARP Tax Assistance, leaf raking and help with snow/ice removal, personal care/homemaking referral, friendly visitor program, social worker counseling/I+R, Brown Bag monthly groceries through Western Mass. Food Bank, Food Box monthly groceries through Amherst Survival Center, free weekly bread/produce giveaway, fuel assistance, emergency food pantry, volunteer driving to doctor’s appointments, SHINE health insurance counseling, tax assistance, Convalescent Loan Closet, Tax Work-Off Plan intake & placement, subsidized van ticket sales, wellness grants, farmers’ market coupon distribution, medical rides and free wheelchair and medical equipment loan closet, and partnership with the SALT Council to provide services such as house numbering, RUOK, File of Life, Drug Take Back Day, SAFE Elder project, Outbooks on Wheels, Salvation Army Office Hours for Emergency Assistance, H.E.L.P. (Hampshire Elder Law Program) assistance, Prescription Pick-Up and Delivery, Wisdom Works Job Training for the unemployed, PVTa ID cards photos, private pay home help I & R, parking sticker program, home safety assessments, Annual Flu Clinics in conjunction with the Amherst Health Department, Alzheimer’s Disease Support.

PARTICIPATION IN FREE/LOW COST FOOD PROGRAMS

Name of Program	FY 08	FY 09	FY 10	FY 11	FY 12
Congregate Hot Lunch	5,420 (11.8% decrease) If no snow days we would have served 5,490 meals and then the decrease would have been 10.7%.	5,120 (5.6% decrease) If no snow we would have served 95 more or 5,215 - a 3.8% decrease	5,966 (17% increase)	5,804 (2.8% decrease caused by 7 snow days i.e. 150 meals otherwise the program had no measurable change)	5,285 (8% decrease. This year we lost a number of daily diners. Seven went into nursing homes or moved and one who died.)
Meals on Wheels (UMass food delivered mid-afternoon)	4,790 (4% decrease) If no snow days we would have served 140 more and seen only a 2% decrease	4,324 (9% decrease) If no snow we would have delivered 101 more or 4,423 - a 7% decrease	4,622 (7% increase) impressive, considering 3 snow days.	4,867 (5.3% increase-- if there had been no snow days the count would have been 5,009 meals or a 8.4% increase)	6,074 (19% increase) (More community awareness with discharge planners)
Home delivered meals (HVES food delivered at 11 AM)	16,749 (4% increase) If no snow we would have delivered 16,961 meals and then the increase would have been 9.5%	16,061 (4% decrease) If no snow we would have served 103 more, 16,164 - a 3.5% decrease	15,182 (5.5% decrease) due to the weather and grantor's fiscal constraints	13,924 (8.3% decrease) partially due to 4 days of weather issues = 245 meals. (Otherwise 6.7 % decrease)	10,805 (22% decrease) meals for 30 people were suspended or terminated by HVES for various reasons.)
Brown Bag (Western Mass Food Bank)	1,016 (>1% change)	1,016 No change	1,054 (4% increase)	979 (7.2% decrease)	820 (16% decrease b/c the Western Mass Food Bank is following the income guidelines more closely b/c food resources are more limited.
Food Box (Survival Center food)	483 (9% decrease)	543 (13% increase)	468 (13.9% decrease)	429 (8.4 % decrease)	421 (More seniors are opting to go to the Survival Center where they can be more selective about their food choices.)
Free Bread & Produce Giveaway	4,960 (10% decrease)	2,338 (48% decrease) Snow days, less food to give out	2,129 (9% decrease BUT #s would have increased if we didn't have to cancel six times.)	2,262 (6.3% increase) The program would have seen a 15.7% increase if we didn't have to cancel 4 weeks due to snow and elections	2,007 (11% decrease probably because there is less food to go around. Merchants are trying not to overstock and overbake.)
Grocery Pantry Emergency Food Give-away	38 (67% decrease)	45 (19% increase)	42 (6.7% decrease)	37 (12% decrease because more people are participating in the weekly free bread and produce program.)	29 (21% decrease in visits b/c more people are going to the Survival Center where there is a larger emergency pantry.

UPDATE ON FOOD PROGRAMS

Our home-delivered **lunchtime** meals program, run in partnership with Highland Valley Elder Services, asks for only a suggested donation from the participant, and continues to be an essential support to elders in Amherst and Pelham as they are living longer and find it difficult to shop, cook and pay for food. As fuel costs increase, the home delivered meal becomes more and more important also as a means to afford other essentials. We have four lunchtime meal delivery routes daily and we use volunteer drivers exclusively. With the price of fuel relatively high, we have been fortunate over the past year that only 25% of our drivers asked for the \$.50/mile reimbursement, though we expect this will change as the price of gas goes up. We receive \$1.19 per home delivered meal from our HVES Title III grant to cover gas and the lunch site director's hourly wage. For a variety of reasons, 30 home delivered meal recipients have been suspended or terminated from our delivery list by Highland Valley. This has reduced the budget we have to work with significantly. Highland Valley suggested we could save gas money by delivering two meals on one day and cancelling delivery the next. We have instituted this change over the summer—we no longer deliver on Wednesdays—instead the Tuesday driver brings the Wednesday meal at the same time. There was a period of adjustment for the drivers to keep everything straight, but this change is now more routine, and this has helped a bit. Our lunch site director resigned at the end of the summer as she made plans to move out of the area. We are paying her replacement a slightly lower hourly wage which will also help with our budget.

Our home-delivered **supper-time** UMASS Meals on Wheels (MOWs) program had an increase of 1,207 meals delivered due to there having been 62 participants, an increase of 10 seniors from FY 11. Additionally, as the MOWs were only cancelled once because of inclement weather, the number of meals delivered was higher. The decrease in the Brown Bag may be a result of the Food Bank of Western Mass being more stringent with following the income eligibility guidelines as a result of a large increase in the number of agencies utilizing their food resources in their catchment area. The Emergency Food Pantry decrease could be due to seniors having access to food through SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), the Survival Center's 4 X weekly hot lunch and day-old bread and produce program, and directing people to the Senior Center's Wednesday Free Bread & Produce program. With the Survival Center Food Box program, the decrease is likely because all 60 participants do not order a box of food each month.

SENIOR PARKING PROGRAM

The Amherst Senior Center is located in the center of town and there is no nearby free parking for participating members or for volunteers. The town's move to upgrade from meters to a more sophisticated digital parking payment system, combined with the impending elimination of senior parking placards, brought the problem to a head and the COA decided in early 2011 to address the problem.

SENIOR HEALTH SERVICES UPDATE

Senior Health Services staffed by a registered nurse, provides a variety of health services to community seniors including blood pressure monitoring, blood glucose testing, medication information, weight monitoring, nutrition information, wound and skin assessment, ear and throat inspection and assistance with responding to a variety of health care needs.

The nurse provides a walk-in clinic in the “Bubble” Room at the Bangs Community Center on Mondays and Thursdays, and in addition has provided a weekly community clinic at the Clark House and Ann Whalen Apartments and has made home visits for those in need. In FY 12, more than 1,537 client contacts were logged for seniors served by the program.

It is important to note that the Amherst Senior Center's Senior Health Services program, receives no Town funding, but continues to grow and thrive thanks to donations and grants. An annual \$10,000 donation from Amherst resident Dorothy Gavin continued to provide the primary funding for the Bangs based twice-weekly clinics over the year. Donations of new medical supplies are also appreciated, to be used in the clinic or distributed to seniors in need.

Other health services offered at the Senior Center include: fee-for-service ear irrigation and foot care clinics with RNs; weekly therapeutic massage clinics; free twice monthly ear irrigation clinics with volunteer, Dr. Daniel Clapp; and approximately 33 health seminars with local health professionals.

NEW FUNDRAISING EFFORT A SUCCESS

For the first time this year we included a solicitation letter in with the Town Clerk’s annual census mailing. Deducting the \$950 paid by the Friends to have the envelopes printed, the enclosure netted \$5,482.

EMERGENCY FUND GRANT

The Amherst Club, a benevolent community group, awarded the Senior Center a \$2,500 grant this year to bulk up the Senior Center’s Emergency Fund Gift Account which was established in October 2009. The money can be used by Amherst elders for medical/dental bills, utility arrearages, rent arrearages, eviction/condemnation situations, emergency home/furnace repair, and miscellaneous situations at the discretion of the Center’s social worker. Applicants must meet income guidelines and have exhausted all other public assistance avenues. Due to the very mild winter this past winter there were only two elder households that utilized \$288.15 of the fund during FY 12 for utility arrearages.

FRIENDS ANNUAL FUNDRAISERS

The Friends of the Amherst Senior Center raised \$14,752 in FY 12. Special fundraisers included the Third Annual Follies (a variety show featuring mostly professional musicians and dancers), Singing Suppers in conjunction with Amherst College’s “Ageless” student volunteers, A Comedy Mystery Dinner Theatre, stylus sales, bake sales, a fundraiser at a local Bertucci’s and a solicitation in the Senior Center newsletter, The Senior Spirit.

STYLUS PROGRAM

One of the Senior Center volunteers, who is also a Council on Aging member, spoke in April 2012 of a new fundraising idea. He had designed and built a stylus for use with the iPod Touch, iPad, iPhone and other tablet computers and smart phones. The stylus is constructed from aluminum tubing, a plastic collar, special electronic foam and is packaged in an attractive display container. The volunteer purchases materials himself, contributes the time needed to fabricate the styluses and contributes all proceeds to the Senior Center. The styluses sell for \$5 each and through June 7 the program has raised \$515.

During the 2011 fiscal year, a proposed new parking program was presented to the Town Manager, the Select Board and the Parking Task Force, and this year a trial parking policy was introduced in the Town of Amherst. Parking stickers were designed and purchased and the necessary forms and computer files were produced to keep track of the program. For a \$10 fee, residents of Amherst 65 years of age and older could purchase stickers for their automobiles which would allow them to park in two lots near the Senior Center during its operating hours for a five-month trial period beginning on August 1, 2011. A total of 106 parking stickers were sold during the five-month trial period. For the current calendar year a total of 137 parking stickers have been sold for \$25 each. The total includes replacement stickers and a few stickers paid for by the Senior Center. The program is jointly sponsored by the Amherst Senior Center and the Town of Amherst and has proven to be a big success.

COMPUTER TUTORING

The Senior Center has four computer tutors who have been teaching students the use of PC computer software for a number of years. Recently a number of potential students have asked for instruction in Apple's operating system and applications software. Also, tablet computers appear to be the computers of the future. The Senior Center does not have an Apple Mac computer or an iPad tablet to use for teaching purposes. Amherst College donated five Mac laptop computers to the Senior Center but the Town's IT Department decided that the computers were too old to load with new software and maintain. Instead the Town's IT Department will provide the Senior Center with two new Mac laptops, install the required software and maintain them. They may also provide a new iPad. The computers donated by Amherst College are being used by the Senior Center tutors and the College has been thanked for their generosity.

LONG RANGE PLANNING

The Long Range Planning Committee of the Council on Aging has been trying for a year and a half to find the best way to expand and improve the space of the Senior Center. We have been working equally on three approaches: modifying our current building, constructing a new community center and building a new stand-alone, one-story Senior Center. The committee decided to sharpen its focus by advancing a plan for a new Senior Center and showing why this approach is superior to the two alternatives. For the short term we also considered expanding the Senior Center space in the current building.

Between March and August 2011 we visited seven new senior centers and two community centers in Connecticut and Massachusetts. We photographed the buildings inside and out and in most cases interviewed the directors. Our objective was to develop design concepts for the Amherst Senior Center, identify design problems either by inspection or by having the directors identify them for us and to get some information on construction costs and the construction project time lines.

Using the size and growth rate of 60+ senior population of Amherst, we calculated the required size of a new Senior Center, the number of parking places required and the total area of the required site for the year 2017. We surveyed the current and proposed activities of the Senior Center and drew up an inventory of the types of rooms that would be needed, their size and arrangement. Finally, we looked at available lots in the Town and identified an ideal site for the new Senior Center. For the short-term objective of modifying the current Bangs Community Center, we calculated the percentage of space increase for various modifications of the building.

The long-range planning committee sent this detailed proposal for increased senior center space to Town Hall on February 28. On April 26 most of the committee met with the Town Manager to discuss the proposal. He responded saying that the Town does not have the necessary funds and that there are other projects with a higher priority. He has agreed to another meeting with the committee to further discuss the need for more Senior Center space. This meeting will be held in the near future.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PHASE I

The late October 2011 snowstorm that created unprecedented havoc in the Pioneer Valley and elsewhere in New England, uncovered weaknesses in our community's safety net. University of Mass. School of Nursing Professor, Dr. Nancy Gilbert, working with her students and a number of Town departments, undertook the first phase of a project during the spring semester focusing on seniors with emergency needs to assess what efforts worked and what didn't work during the storm. It is hoped that eventually a product will be developed that will enable people in the community to identify elders at risk (and for elders themselves to self-identify) as an on-going effort. A database could then be maintained at the Senior Center. As a final semester project, the students presented a seminar to elders with guidelines for emergency preparation "in place" (at home.)

RESTAURANT TAX RELIEF

The Friends of the Amherst Senior Center has been paying sales tax for meals provided for seniors on Amherst Senior Center bus trips and other outings. This was not necessary because the Friends is a tax exempt organization and the Travel Club programs are financially run by the Friends. While the Friends has been registered with the Federal IRS as a tax-exempt 501C-3 and with the Massachusetts Department of State, it was not registered with the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (MassDOR). As part of the program to obtain meal tax-free status, the Friends of the Amherst Senior Center registered with the MassDOR and then filed the necessary paperwork to obtain the tax-free status.

OUTREACH

Funded by a Title III grant from Highland Valley Elder Services, the part-time Outreach Worker led seminars on safety issues, translated into Spanish the Senior Center monthly calendars from the newsletter and posted them at the Ann Whalen Apartments and the Clark House, and worked to involve more Latino elders at the Senior Center in programs and in volunteering. As a result we have seen more Latinos participating in the Wednesday Bread & Produce Program and in volunteering for the Noon Congregate Lunch Program. The Social Worker will continue to work with the Latino community to increase participation in programs and volunteering.

TAX WORK-OFF PLAN

The Tax Work-Off Plan enables seniors (age 60 and above), whose primary residence is in Amherst and who meet the income guidelines, to work 125 hours for a \$1,000 abatement on their property taxes per fiscal year. The work, performed in Town departments, does not replace any employee positions. On 6/11/12 the Selectboard approved an increase of 5 slots in the program for a total of 35. The 5 additional slots were filled immediately as there were five eligible seniors on the wait list. Participants worked in the following departments: Senior Center, Jones Library, Munson Library, Leisure Services, and the Collectors Office. A full amount of 1,771 hours was

worked by the 18 Tax Work-Off participants in a variety of positions at the Senior Center. Five of those participants donated 320 hours as they each worked beyond the 125 hours. Intake and placement is handled by Senior Center Social Worker, Maura Plante.

IN-KIND DONATIONS

Although resources through the Town budget are limited, the Senior Center is able to offer a wide array of programs and services because of two important categories of contributions: volunteer time and in-kind donations of goods and services.

In FY 12 approximately 15,971 hours of volunteer time was given by 343 volunteers in the following categories:

# of Hours Given	# of Volunteers
20 hours/week or more	2
5 hrs/wk up to 19.5 hrs/wk	7
1-5 hrs/wk	60
10hrs/yr to 50hrs/yr	152
Less than 10 hrs/yr	122

The value of these hours, according to the Independent Sector is \$240,563.48

In-kind donations represent tangible goods or services generally considered essential for the Senior Center's operations, but not paid for out of its budget.

In-Kind Donation	Estimated Value
Rent/Space (gross square feet=13,505)	\$152,250
Gas donated by meals deliverers, staff	\$9,452
Utilities	\$23,000
Van Garaging, Gas & Service	\$342.31
Custodial/Maintenance	\$28,762
Plowing/Outside Maintenance	\$16,607
Durable Medical Equipment	\$14,457
Computers/phones/printers/tech. support	\$35,000
Donated Goods	\$2,748
Value of Crafts Made & Sold for Sr. Ctr.	\$355
Recognition Event	\$300
Furniture/Equipment	\$2,011
Office Supplies	\$852
Entertainers, program expenses	\$3,196
MSC® Service Annual Fee	\$1,170
Luncheons, food for all nutrition programs	\$264,579

The table looks at some FY 12 in-kind donations (this list is not exhaustive.) The estimated in-kind total for FY 12 is \$604,858

In-Kind Donation	Estimated Value
Cable TV Service, Golden Age Radio	\$719.88
Books/Videos/Magazines/Puzzles	\$1,000
Piano tuning	\$300
Outreach Grant	\$3,500
Newsletter	\$9,678
Lunch Site Director & Assistant	\$13,675
Water Cooler/Heater Rental	\$240
Equip. rental & maintenance	\$406
Craft Workers, Nursing Center Expenses	\$11,000
Amherst College Art Programs	\$5,000
Conference Fees/Membership Dues	\$421

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Hirsh Pagano, Director